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NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Eminent Kenyan Writer, Playwright & Journalist to Give Two Public Lectures at University of Winnipeg's Global College

WINNIPEG— Rebellion. Loss. Prison. Torture. Exile. World renowned writer, playwright, journalist, and lecturer **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**, born James Ngugi in 1938 in British-ruled Kenya, has lived through it all and used each experience to shape his thinking and scholarship.

The University of Winnipeg's Global College and Department of History welcome prominent Kenyan writer and scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o to the campus on **Friday, March 18, 2005** to present **two free, public lectures at the University's Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall** (3rd Floor Centennial Hall):

Lecture One:

The Making of a Writer: Reflections on Race & Discrimination

12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Lecture Two:

Language, Human Rights & Globalization

7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. with a reception following the lecture

All events are free and open to the public.

Educated at a mission-run school, Ngũgĩ became a devout Christian. He went on to the Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda to receive a BA in English in 1963. His family was caught up in the Mau Mau rebellion; he lost his stepbrother, and his mother was tortured. His play, *The Black Hermit*, was produced in Kampala in 1962.

Following the publication of his novel *A Grain of Wheat* which marked his embrace of Fanonist Marxism, Ngũgĩ renounced English, Christianity, and the name James Ngugi as colonialist—changing his name to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. He then began to write in his native Gĩkũyũ and Swahili. The uncensored political message of his 1977 play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* resulted in the order from his arrest by President Daniel arap Moi. While detained in the Kamithi Maximum Security Prison, he wrote another English novel, *Petals of Blood* (1978).

Ngũgĩ was not reinstated to his job as professor at Nairobi University after his release from prison. And, on the heels of the ongoing harassment of his family, he left Kenya on June 5, 1982, to live in self-imposed exile in London.

He has published a wide array of works, including the first modern novel in Gĩkũyũ, *Caitani mũtharaba-Inĩ* (*Devil on the Cross*). He argued that African writers should use their native languages when writing, rather than European languages, to build an authentic African literature.

In 1992 he became a professor of comparative literature and performance studies at New York University, and held the Erich Maria Remarque Chair. He is currently Director of Faculty and Staff Counselling Centre at the University of California, Irvine, and heads the International Centre for Writing and Translation.

He has given a number of distinguished lectures, including: the 2003 Steve Biko Memorial Lecture in Johannesburg, South Africa; the 1999 Ashby lecture at Cambridge University; the 1996 Clarendon Lectures in English at Oxford; and, the 1984 Robb Lectures at Auckland University. Professor Ngũgĩ was elected an Honorary Member in the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2002.

Last fall Ngũgĩ ended his exile to return to Kenya as part of a month-long tour of East Africa where thieves broke into his apartment stealing money and a computer, brutalizing the professor, and raping his wife.

Bibliography:

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o works include: *Weep not Child* (London, 1964); *The River Between* (London, 1965); *A Grain of Wheat* (London, 1967); *Petals of Blood* (London, 1977); *Caitani Mũtharabainĩ* (Nairobi, 1980) (English trs: *Devil on the Cross* (London, 1982); *Detained: A Writers Prison Diary* (London, 1982); *Matigari Ma Njirũngi* (Nairobi, 1986; English trs: *Matigari* (London, 1989); *Homecoming* (London, 1969); *Decolonising the Mind* (London, 1986); *Moving the Centre; Struggle For Cultural Freedoms*, (London, 1993); *Writers in Politics* (London, 1997); *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams* (Oxford, 1998); *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (with Micere Mugo) (London, 1976); *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (with Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ) (Nairobi, 1980) (English trs: *I will marry when I want* (London, 1982). Ngũgĩ has also written the *Njamba Nene* series for children and he now edits the Gĩkũyũ language journal, *Mũtiiri*, now based at ICWT.

The University of Winnipeg's Global College is a dynamic, multi-disciplinary action-oriented college without borders. It is a unique centre where global citizenship, human rights, and issues affecting the planet can be researched, discussed, and debated by community members, students of all ages, members of the immigrant community, governments, NGO agencies, and the business community. The Global College is a place where we as citizens can figure out our role within the global community, our responsibility to protect, and our responsibility to act. It is a vital nexus that brings us all together, opens up the world, and enables us to chart a course for the future.

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